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ABSTRACT

Intended for elementary level students, this book presents 12 writing ideas and several suggestions on how students can make a book using their writing. Each writing idea is presented with a brief description (addressed to the student), several examples of student writing, and a blank page on which to write. Writing ideas include freewriting, describing, acrostics, haiku, and remembering. Suggestions for making a book include several ideas on how to illustrate written work, and a set of stencils is located on the back cover. A glossary of terms, a list of further books on writing, and a questionnaire for evaluating this book are provided. An accompanying teacher's manual presents guidelines and suggestions for using and extending the ideas outlined in the student's book. Following a brief introduction of general advice to the teacher, several activities and ideas are presented to extend each writing exercise. The manual also includes instructions on how to make hardback books from students' written work. (MM)

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# The Writing Book

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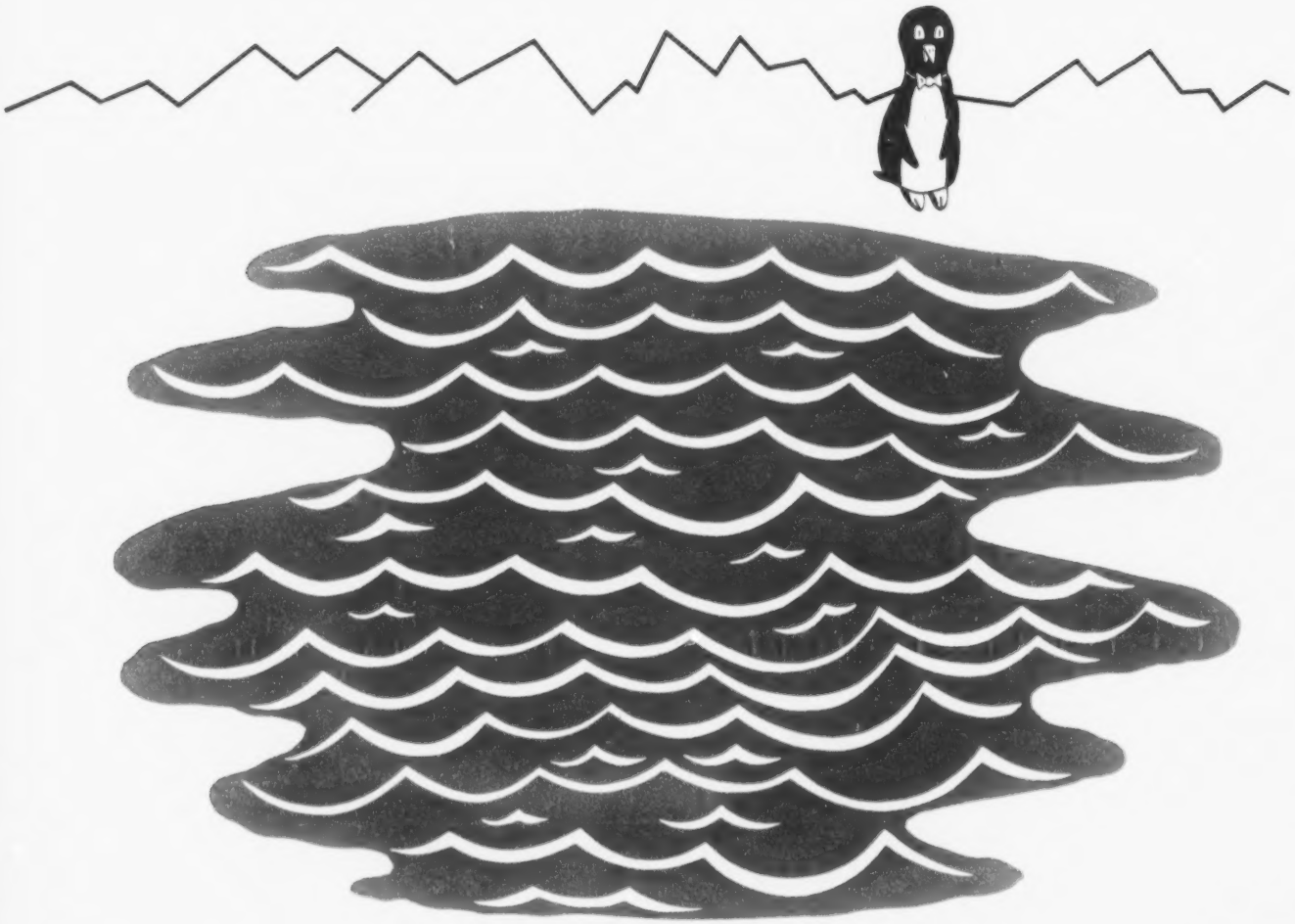
# The Writing Book

by
Inky Penguin



Teachers & Writers Collaborative
New York, N.Y.

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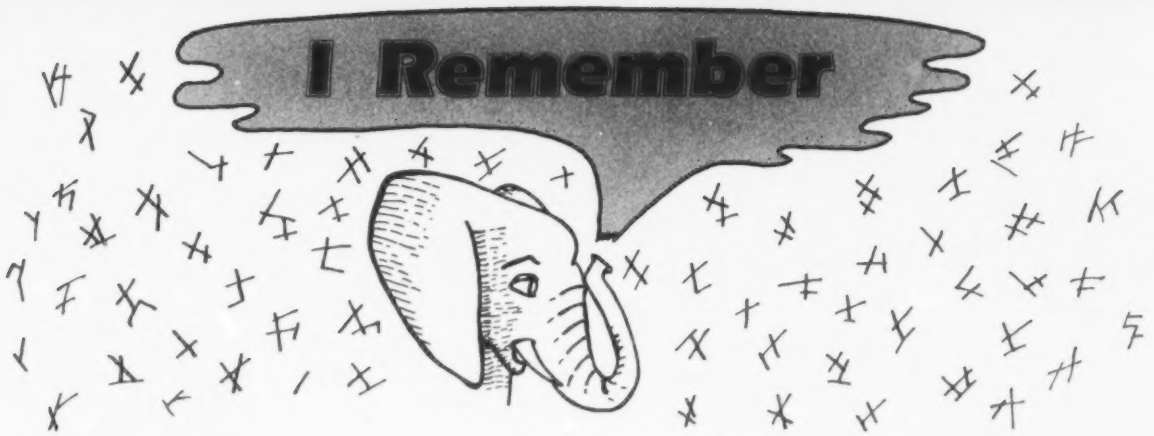
# Hello!

You're going to like this book. It's going to be fun for you to use. And in using it you're going to be surprised by how smart and imaginative you are. You'll find yourself enjoying writing, too. No kidding!

Actually this book is only half finished. The other half is for you to write. I know you'll do a good job, because I'm a penguin and I know about these things. (Actually I'm just a person who is pretending to be a penguin.)

If you think writing is too hard and yeck, remember:

- This book is now *yours*. You can write anything you want in it. Anything.
- There are some art ideas, as well as writing ideas, in this book.
- You can be silly, crazy, dreamy, happy, so-so, sad, or very serious. Whatever you like. Be the silly you, the crazy you, the dreamy you, the so-so you, the sad you, or the very serious you.
- There are no tests in this book. There are no right or wrong answers.
- Your writing and art in it will not be graded. You *can't* flunk!
- You don't have to worry about spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or grammar when writing in this book.
- You can be as messy as you like. Cross out words, add new ones, or move the old ones around.
- If you write a poem, it doesn't have to rhyme.
- It's easier if you follow the writing ideas in the order they're in, starting with memories (p. 2). But if you want to skip around, go ahead.
- If you want to change any of the writing or art ideas in this book, please do. They're meant to be good suggestions for you, not rules.
- With each writing idea, I've given some examples by other kids. You can get ideas from these examples, but don't just copy them.
- If you don't like writing alone all the time, you can team up with a friend and write a piece together.
- Some of the writing ideas in this book go well with some of the art ideas.
- Color in the illustrations, if you want to.
- If you don't know the meaning of a word in this book, look for it in the glossary, which is on p. 41. (It even explains what a "glossary" is.)
- Let yourself go. Let yourself have a good time writing and making art.
- Trust me. Did you ever get bad advice from a penguin?




# Remembering

Memories are strange and interesting. Like a time machine, they take you back in time. Memories can be good or bad or both or neither one, and they can be about anything, such as

- the earliest thing you remember in your life
- a special place where you lived or visited
- something that happened to you long ago
- someone you knew
- a pet you had
- a particular moment that was so special you've always remembered it
- a moment that wasn't special, but that you remember anyway.

What I want you to do is to close your eyes (no peeking!) and relax. Take a deep breath, in and out. Let your mind go back to something you remember pretty well.

Let yourself be there again and let it all happen again in your memory. Look around you in that memory and see the colors, hear the sounds, and smell the smells again. Notice as many details as you can.

Then open your eyes and write down exactly what you just remembered.

It can be one big memory or several small ones. You can start by writing "I remember" and go from there. If you need to, you can always go back and get more memories, and add them to what you've written.

## Examples

I remember when I threw my brother a cup of soda at his face.
I remember playing with my cousin's dancing-playing-hearing record, turning off the lights, playing the drums, acting like a ghost.
I remember taking water and then spitting all over the house.
I remember putting ketchup in a water gun and saying to my brother, "I killed you, I am very foolish." What a happy time we had.

—*Evelyn Cardenas*/Grade 5

I remember when I was about 3 or 4 years old in Kentucky. I used to wait for a wind to come along because this lady had a stone seal in her front yard. Any time the wind came by, it would make an eerie noise over the seal's mouth.

—*Chris*/Grade 6

Now it's your turn. . .

(If you want to write more, just use sheets of your own paper.)

BEFORE

AFTER

BEFORE

AFTER

# Used to/But Now

When you were a baby you used to wear diapers, but now you wear underwear. You used to say, "Goo goo bla bla," but now you say, "Please pass the hot dogs." You used to crawl on the floor, but now you can run or stand on one leg. You've changed, and so has everything else.

Think about how things have changed:

- how you used to be one way, but now you're different
- how you used to feel one way, but now you feel different
- how you used to like one thing, but now you like something else
- how things used to look, but how they look now
- how people used to treat you, but how they treat you differently now.

Begin with "I used to" and continue with "But now."

## Examples

I used to be a snowman but now I'm a puddle
I used to be a knight in armor but now I'm a pile of junk
I used to suck my thumb but now I bite my nails
I used to take a bath but now I take a shower
I used to drink grape juice but now I have come a long way to Ha-waiian Punch
I used to climb the furniture but now I climb the trees
I used to be a devil but now I'm an angel
I used to be the sun but now I am a speck of dust
I used to be in a crib but now I am in jail
I used to be a cucumber but now I'm a pickle
—*Michelle and Tom*/Grade 5

I used to want to be a baseball player
with my brother
But now I want to be a dancer
I used to want to be a singer
But now I want to be a dancer
I used to want to be a model
But now I want to be a dancer
I used to want to be a queen
But now I want to be a dancer
I used to want to be a dressmaker
But now I want to be a dancer
I used to want to be a boy
But now I want to be a dancer
I used to want to be a pen
But now I want to be a dancer
I used to want to be a king
But now I want to be a dancer
—*Marion Mackles*/Grade 3

(If you want to write more, just use sheets of your own paper.)

# Dreaming

Your memories—from the first thing you remember to your memory of what happened five minutes ago—form a big country inside your head. Right next to it is another big country, the country of dreams.

Some dreams are fun, like dreams of flying or finding money or having a wish come true. Some dreams—bad dreams or nightmares—aren't so much fun. But all dreams are fascinating because no matter how weird they are, they seem real while they're happening. Believe it or not, *everybody* has weird dreams.

Think of a strong dream you've had, maybe one you had long ago or one from last night. Remember as many details as you can. Write down what happened in the dream, no matter how strange it was. Remember how things *changed* right in the middle of your dream. Write it down as if you're telling it to a friend.

And if you can't remember a dream, make one up.

## Hints: How to Remember Your Dreams Better

- When you first wake up in the morning, keep your eyes closed for a while. Go back over the dream or dreams you had that night. Replay them in your head. Then, open your eyes and replay them again. This helps bring them into your memory.
- Keep a notebook next to your bed and write down your dreams as soon as you wake up. This makes a Dream Diary.

## Examples

**Tree Dreamer**

When I was little I almost always dreamed about tall trees, all kinds of beautiful leaves. I would be sitting on the ground painting the trees, and the trees would come and bend down and ask me if I needed any help. Sometimes the trees and I would sing songs and play games and everything but it always ended the same way. The people camping next to the forest would forget to put out their fire and the trees would get burned.

—*Anita*/Grade 6

**Dreams**

I dreamed that I had a fingernail telephone.

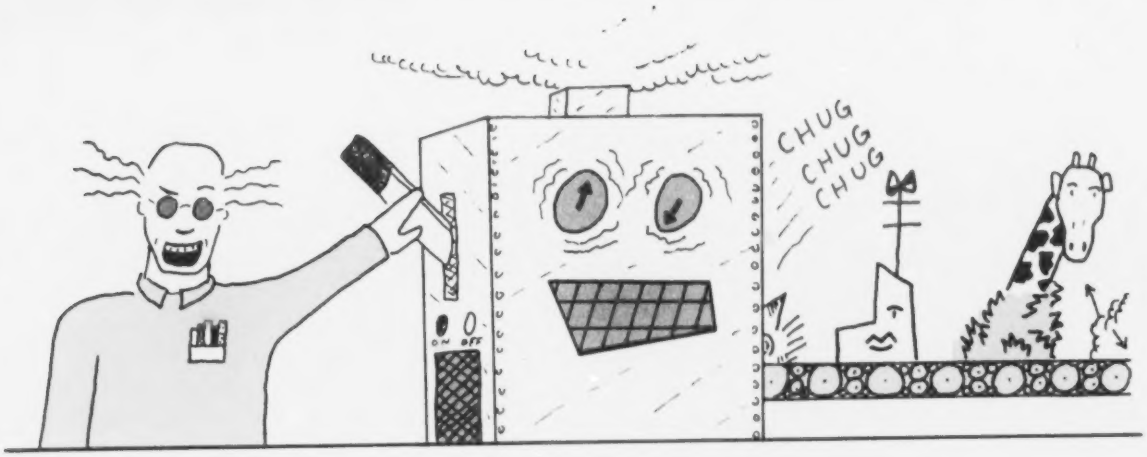
I dreamed that my clock was made of candy and I bit off a number every hour.

I dreamed I was small enough to drive a Matchbox car.

I dreamed I was swimming underwater and I saw a turtle selling iced tea.

—*Jeff and Terri*/Grade 4

(If you want to write more, just use sheets of your own paper.)




# Inventing

You know it's important to tell the truth, but you also know how much fun it can be

- *not* to tell the truth ("The dog ate my homework")
- to fool someone ("There's a spider on your back")
- to say something that is a gigantic lie ("My rubber legs were created on the barking planet of Mongo").

Harmless lies are not only O.K. in stories and poems, they are welcome!

So if you're tired of having to tell the truth all the time, now's your chance to make up the biggest, weirdest, most fantastic bunch of lies ever to hit the world. Let yourself go completely nuts inventing your lies. Be the world's greatest inventor of lies.

## Examples

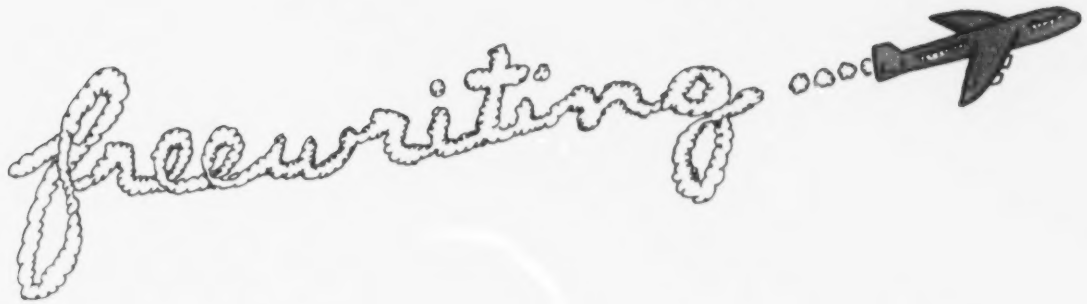
I have a friend who is a yellow stone that stays in my pocket and whistles.
—*Anonymous*/Grade 7

I have 487 dogs that march around the house at night singing "The Star-Spangled Banner."
—*Anonymous*/Grade 7

**I Was**

I was a cartoon on television. I was a broom standing in a corner. I swept floors with my feet. I didn't like sweeping floors.
I was bought from a store.
I was able to talk.
I was a movable broom.
I was very mad because all I did was sweep.
I was finally so mad I turned right back into a tree.
I threw my tree of oranges at the people I swept floors for.
—*Ilona Baburka*/Grade 4

(If you want to write more, just use sheets of your own paper. You might also want to invent some drawings using a stencil. See p. 39.)




# Freewriting

Freewriting is fun because when you do it you let yourself go fast, like on a roller coaster. It's like you're flying through a blizzard of ideas and images. You aren't tied down by rules and regulations. You are *free* and *writing*.

It's easy. All you do is sit down and write as fast as you can without stopping. That's the only rule: *keep writing words nonstop*. They don't have to make sense—you can write "glabba glabba gooba booba" if you want. You can write "I don't know what to write" if you want. *Anything,* as long as you keep going for a set period of time, such as five minutes.

Why do this?

- Because it's a great loosening-up exercise. Anything you write afterwards seems easier.
- Because sometimes you'll surprise yourself by writing something you didn't know you could write.
- Because part of what you write might be good enough to use in a poem or story later.
- Because it's fun.

Notice in the examples below that the authors thought they didn't have anything to write, but it turned out they did.

## Examples

I don't have anything to write. I don't have anything to write. I don't have anything to write. I think of going down that stream and taking off my shoes and running right through it and then taking off my clothes and jumping right into the water on such a nice hot sunny day and the water so cool and splashing all the water around with such happiness. I don't have anything to write. I don't have anything to write. I don't have anything to write. My hand is falling off. I don't have anything to write. I don't have anything to write.

—*Anonymous*

Here I am I have to keep my pencil moving and it's hard because it makes me a little nervous so I can't think yet like being on a stage and not remembering your lines or in a spelling bee like I was and my teacher expected me to win but I missed an easy word and felt like shrinking into a tiny dot because I had let her down but the next day it didn't seem to make any difference in anything so there. Is my time up? Did I do good?

—*Anonymous*

(If you want to write more, just use sheets of your own paper.)

# Describing

Good writers are like detectives—they notice things that other people don't. They see tiny details, they hear faint sounds, they smell different currents in the air. All their senses are alert.

Examine the place you're in. Use all five of your senses. Try to see something, to hear a sound, to smell a smell, to feel a surface, to taste a taste—things that no one else will notice. Make your eyes be super-eyes, your ears super-ears, and so on.

Then write down the particular things you notice. You might want to begin with:

- I see...
- I hear...
- I smell...
- I touch...
- I taste...

Or you could pick one of these and write about it by "zooming in," which is particularly good for things that you see. For example: "The walls in this room are light blue. On one wall is a green chalkboard with the word *hello* written on it in white chalk. A fly just landed above the letter *h*. On its legs are little hairs. The hairs are glowing in the sunlight." See how it zooms in, from a whole room to a tiny part of it?

Remember, pick something special that no one else will notice.

I almost forgot! You can add things that aren't really there, and make it sound as though they are. Or, if you want, you can make it *all* up.

## Example

As I look around the room I see people's eyeballs pop out ready to kill. In front of me I see Alma with a magic marker in her mouth thinking and her fluffy pony tail that reminds me of cotton candy. Down next to her, Andre's sticking his fist in his mouth while I hear pens and pencils moving that seem to be translating to each other. I feel the bright warm sun making me hot and I look at it making my eyes close because of its bright light. I see people studying each other. I hear noses sniffing and mouths giggling. I hear the sandpapery sound of erasing pencils. I see the daisy picture at the top of the blackboard. It looks so much like a clown with its bald yellow head and white fringes on his jumper.

—*Sandra*/Grade 6

Now it's your turn...

(If you want to write more, just use sheets of your own paper. You might also want to do some Blind Contour Drawings to go with your description. See p. 30.)

# Acrostics

**A**ll you have to do to
**C**reate an acrostic
(**R**eally!) is turn a word
**O**ver on its
**S**ide so
**T**hat
**I**t
**C**an be filled in like this,
**S**ee?

Pick a word. Any word. Your first name, for instance. Now write it *down* the paper, not across. If your name were Lulubelle, it would look like this:

**L**
**U**
**L**
**U**
**B**
**E**
**L**
**L**
**E**

Next, fill in the lines with any words that pop into your head. For example:

**L** eaning
**U** nder the really
**L** ovely cow's
**U** dders, my dog began to
**B** ark at the
**E** legant
**L** ittle
**L** adies who were
**E** xercising.

Do you see how this funny barnyard scene spilled out of the name Lulubelle? This poetry form is called the *acrostic.*

Do an acrostic with your name (if your first name is very short, use both your first and last names). Then try writing an acrostic with other words or even with sentences. The more you do the better you get.

## Hint

The acrostic is one way of sending secret messages, as in:

**I** nside the
**L** oud
**O** ven the
**V** ampire
**E** xclaimed and
**Y** elled
"**O** uch!" and
"**U** gh!"

What's the message hidden in this acrostic?

## More Examples

**O** pen your mind to the
**U** niverse, and
**R** un back home and get your lunch.
—*Juan*/Grade 7

**E** verything around me
**N** ow is
**J** ust so full
**O** f
**Y** ou and me.
—*Joseph*/Grade 3

**I** nside of everybody everything can be
**N** ice, for God gives you a brain.
**C** an you think of a way that you can
**R** ead a great saying and say,
"**E** verybody, let's sing a song in harmony"?
**D** id you ever have something incredible
**I** n your own home?
**B** e a winner.
**L** et's all be incredible!
**E** verybody, come on!
—*Daniel*/Grade 3

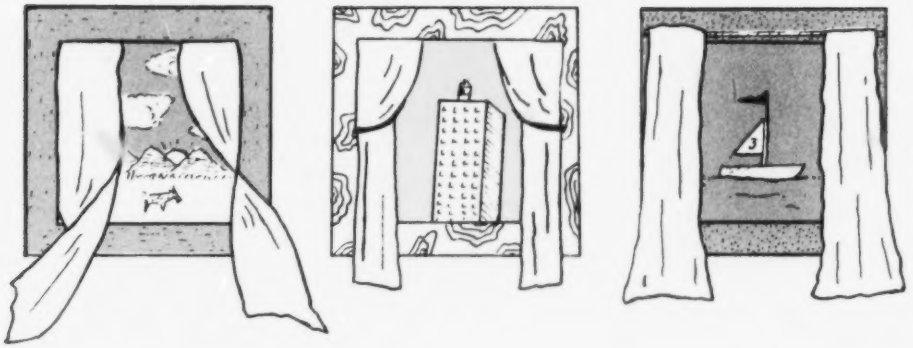




Now it's your turn...

(If you want to write more, just use sheets of your own paper.)

# HAIKU



## Haiku

Some poems are big, long, large, huge, enormous, and gigantic. Others are tiny. Centuries ago the Japanese invented a tiny poem called the *haiku* ("hi-*coo*"). The haiku followed certain rules. Through the years (and across the ocean to America) those rules have gone through changes, so that now there are many types of haiku.

Here's how to write one type of haiku. First, write down two lines about nature. Make them pretty. Make it so that anyone could tell from them what season you're describing. Include real things (like roses, fog, and the moon). Don't include your opinions ("I like summer").

Next, add a third line that has *nothing* to do with the first two lines.

This third line will make your haiku surprising. It will also magically change the feeling in the first two lines.

## Examples

It's raining out
the rivers overflow
and I'm listening to the radio

•

The bees are acting up
They're stinging
Merry Christmas

•

It is summer
The river is flowing
My friend has blond hair

•

It's snowing outside
It's also raining
Meanwhile Winnie the Pooh's stomping
on cookies

Flowers in the yard
Berries on the bush
Batman and Robin just killed a pig

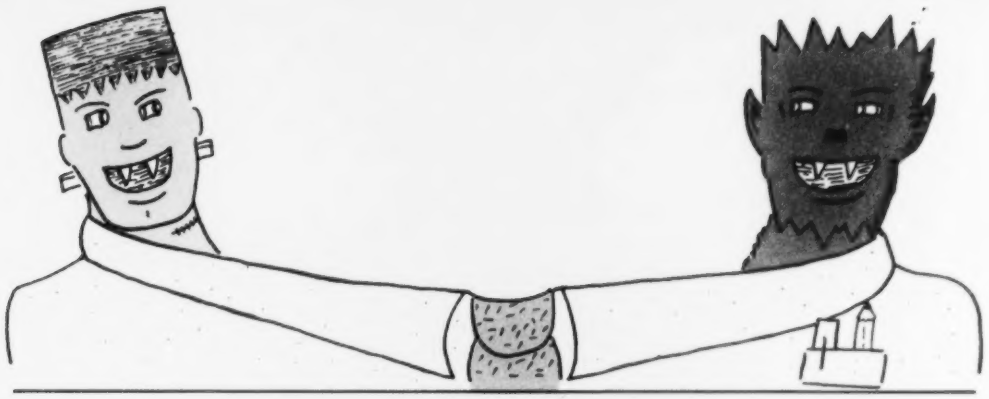
•

The shimmering sun looking over the
brown shady green woods
Flowers dancing in the cooling breeze
I have a piano lesson

•

Butterflies in the air,
Floating in the breeze,
The plane went down instead of up.
—*Anonymous*/Grade 5

(If you want to write more, just use sheets of your own paper. You might also want to illustrate your haiku with Eraser Prints. See p. 32.)



# Partners

So far you've been writing things by yourself. Sometimes it's more exciting to write with another person. It's like having two brains! Your partner's ideas will cause your ideas to change, so they can all go together. In this way you and your partner end up with a poem or story that neither of you expected. It's an adventure.

There are lots of ways that partners can write together. Here are a few:

• Both partners decide on a subject to write about. Partner #1 writes the first line, then covers it up by folding the paper down or using a cover sheet. Partner #2 writes the second line, then pulls the paper down to cover lines 1 and 2. And so on, alternating. Don't peek at the lines already written. Make the poem as long as you want. When you've finished, uncover it and read the whole poem for the first time.

• Partner #1 writes some questions—maybe five of them—that begin with the word "Why." At the same time, on a different sheet of paper, partner #2 writes an equal number of answers that begin with "Because." Then you put the questions and answers together. Sometimes they make no sense, but sometimes they make a wonderful and weird kind of sense.

There are many ways to write with a partner. They are called *collaborations.* (Friends writing letters back and forth is a form of collaboration.) Feel free to make up new ways to collaborate.

## Examples

**Birthday**

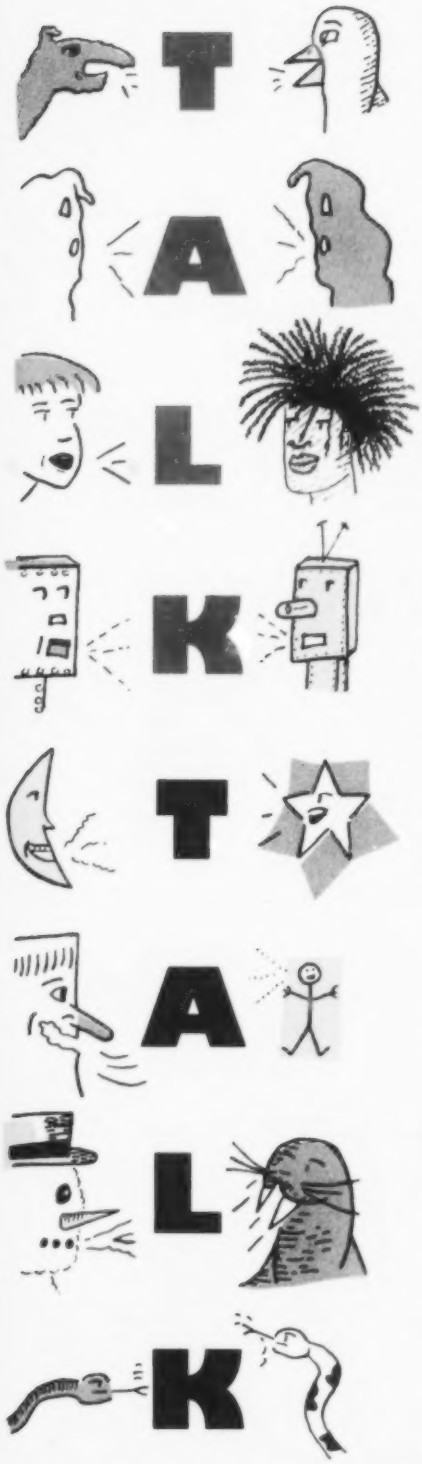
Our minds, Vivian, are trying to be other minds.
People have red hair.
Birthday party for me, people can come to a special place.
—*Lorraine Fedison and Vivian Tuft*/Grade 5

**Imagination**

With a circle going round within and without the moon and stars.
I wear a blue dress.
—*Lorraine Fedison and Vivian Tuft*/Grade 5

(If you want to write more, just use sheets of your own paper. You might also want to do Exquisite Corpse now. See p. 36.)

# Dialogue




The word *dialogue* comes from an Ancient Greek word that means "two talkers." In English it means "conversation" and it can be between two or more talkers.

"Writing a dialogue is easy," said Igor.

"I agree!" shouted Santa Claus.

There are many ways to write dialogue. Here are some:

- Pretend you're a detective or a spy. Go somewhere where you can secretly overhear two people talking, like on a bus, in the school lunchroom, or in your own living room. Remember what they say and go write it down. (*Note:* Don't spy on someone if, in that particular case, it seems rude to you.)
- Listen to someone talking on the phone. Write down as much as you can of what they say. Leave a blank space when the other speaker talks. Later, in those blank spaces, write what you think the other person *might* have said.
- Make up a conversation in which two people argue.
- Make up a conversation in which one person asks questions and the other person replies.

These conversations can be between two persons, between a person and a thing, or between two things.

You can write them with quotation marks around the spoken parts:

"What's your name?" asked the snowman.

"I am the great Inky Penguin," I answered.

Or, if it's not confusing to the reader, you can leave the quotation marks out.

Or you can write it in play form:

SNOWMAN: What's your name?

INKY: I am the great Inky Penguin.

## Example

**Waking Up**

"Jeremiah, are you awake?" said Zach at 6:00 in the morning.

"I am now, Zach. What d'ya want?" I said angrily.

"Can you come upstairs with me?" said Zach meekly.

"I don't move from this pillow for another hour and a half," I said calmly.

"Please," Zach said while throwing a block at me.

"O.K.!" I screamed, tumbling out of bed.

"I love you, Jeremiah," he said while butting me in the stomach with his head.

—*Jeremiah Greenblatt*/Grade 5

Now it's your turn...

(If you want to write more, just use sheets of your own paper.)

# COllAgE

For this you'll need some materials:

- old magazines or newspapers
- scissors
- glue (or tape)

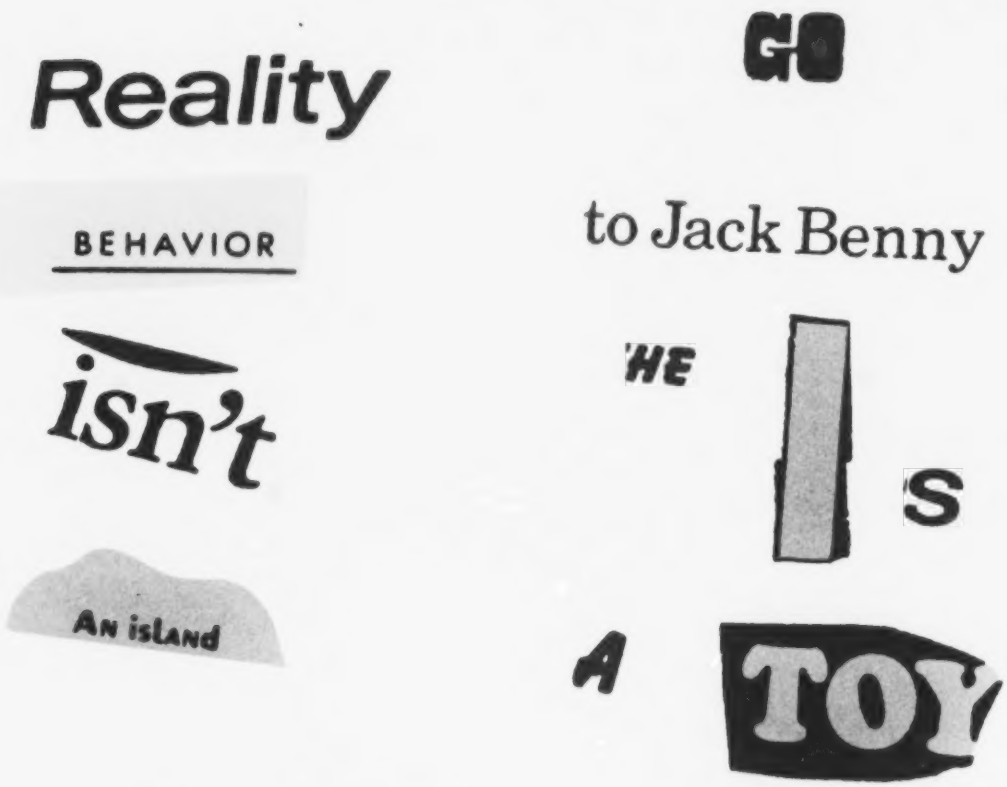
Turn through the magazines or newspapers and cut out words and sentences you like. The advertisements usually have words in different typefaces, some fat, some skinny. When you've cut out a bunch, pick out one piece you like particularly. Lay it down at the top of the next page of this book (or on a separate sheet of paper).

Then pick another piece from your pile and lay it down just below the first one. Keep picking and adding this way for a while—you can use as many pieces as you like. You can move the pieces around, or substitute new ones.

As you add new words, reread the piece you're making. At some point you will look at it and feel that it's finished. Then stick the pieces in place. You now have a collage poem.

If you want to make copies of it, get it photocopied (xeroxed).

## Examples






27

Now it's your turn...

(If you want to write more, just use sheets of your own paper. You might want to make a collage art work now. See p. 34.)

~~Changing what you write~~
~~Changing your writig~~
Revising ~~your writing~~

# Revising

Revising means going back and changing something you've written. The idea is to make a so-so piece better or to make a good piece great. Revising does *not* mean correcting spelling and punctuation and making it all neat. It means taking out bad parts, adding new parts, and improving other parts by changing the ideas and using different words.

You might want to revise some of the things you (or other people) have written in this book. Here are some methods for revising a piece of writing:

- Let it age a little. Sometimes when we write something, it seems great at first, but later it doesn't look as good. Sometimes our writing looks only so-so at first, but later it sounds pretty good. In any case, don't look at your writing for a week or even longer. Then you'll be able to see better how to improve it.
- Read it aloud to yourself. What parts sound good? What parts sound less good? Try taking out the bad parts. Then read it aloud again. Is it O.K. now? Or can you think of anything to replace what you took out? Or should you add something brand new?
- Try moving some of the words around, to new spots. You can do this by putting a circle around them and drawing an arrow from the circle to where they should go.
- Read it aloud to friends. Then ask them to repeat what you just read to them, to tell it back to you. Just hearing what they say will tell you what parts of your piece are the most memorable. It helps to be able to see your writing as others see it.

Then you could ask your friends what they liked and didn't like about your piece. You don't have to agree with them. Just hearing their opinions will sometimes give you a new idea for your piece, even if their opinions are dumb!

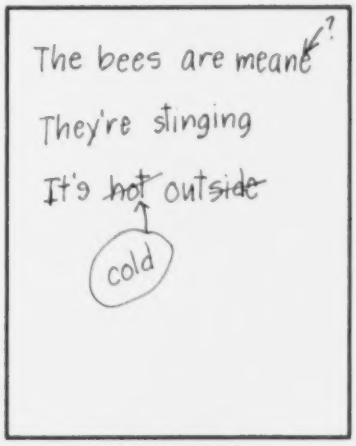
- Give a piece of your writing to friends and ask them to make any changes they want. (You might want to trade pieces with them, so you can revise their pieces as they are revising yours.) Sometimes the changes will be for the better, sometimes for the worse. In both cases, they'll allow you to see your piece in a new light. That's what "revising" means.
- Be patient. You might have to revise a piece again and again. And it might not turn out well even then. Usually it does get better.

## Copyediting

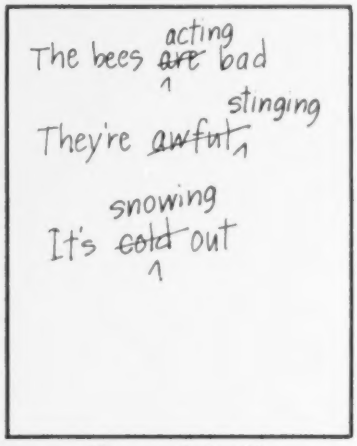
As a final step, you might want to check your spelling and punctuation and grammar. This step is called *copyediting*. Correct and neat writing is easier for other people to read and understand. For example, if you write a note that says "Hl iv b cdnp" how is anyone else going to know that you're saying "Help, I've been kidnapped"?

But if your spelling isn't so good now, don't worry. Some great writers have been bad spellers. In the creative part of writing, you don't have to be correct. But if you like to be correct, fine. After all, it's *your* writing.

## Example




(First draft)

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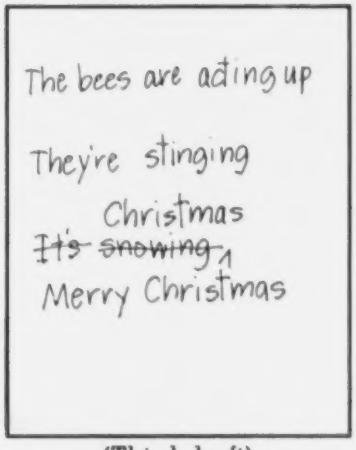
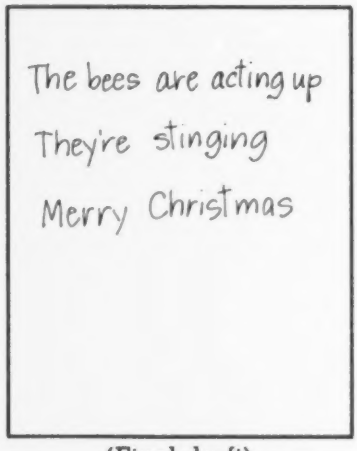



(Third draft)




(Final draft)

# How to Make Your Own Book

After you've written some pieces you like, you might want to make a book out of them. It doesn't have to be a big, complicated job. In fact it's easy. All you need are a few materials.

## Simple Book #1

### Materials:

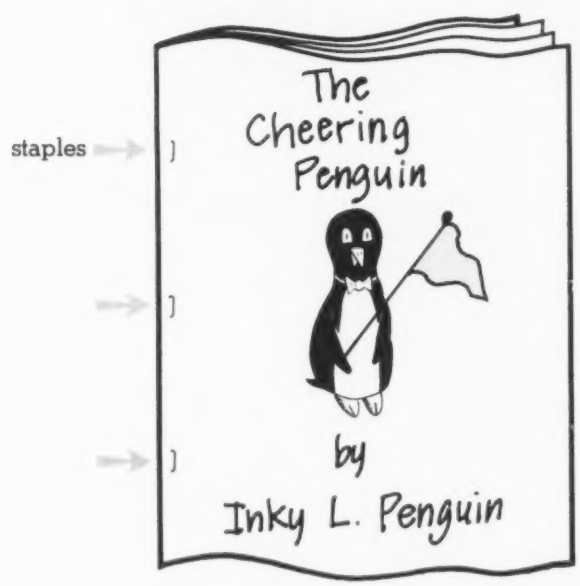
- Sheets of paper (any size)
- Stapler or needle and thread (or yarn). (If you want to buy a stapler, I recommend an inexpensive little one called the Tiny Tot.)
- Optional: A sheet of construction paper or any stiff paper (same size as the other sheets)

Copy your writing onto the sheets. (If you're making lots of copies of the same book, you might want to xerox the writing, instead of copying it over and over by hand.) Then add two blank sheets on top of the rest.

The first blank sheet will be your book cover, so you might want to use construction paper for it. Write your book's title and your name on it.

On the second blank page write the same thing, only in smaller letters, and add, if you want, the name of the publishing company (you!). You get to make up a name. (I called my publishing company Igloo Books.)

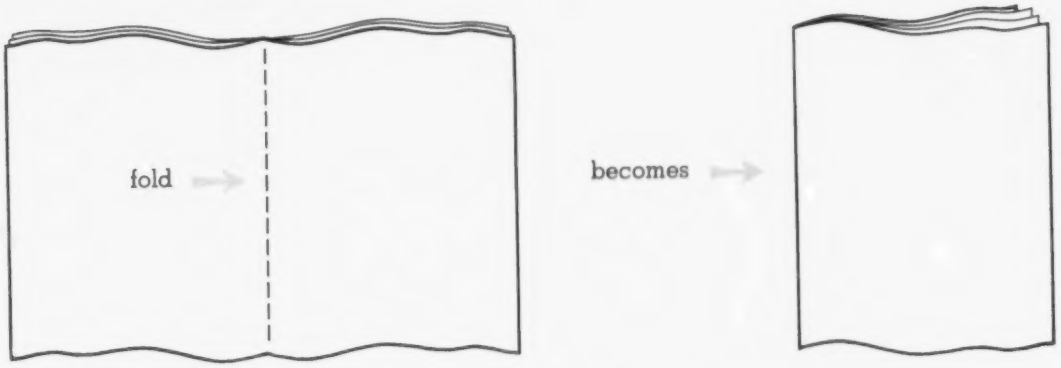
Now staple along the left edge. Here's how my first book looked:




I could make it prettier by gluing a tall strip of paper around the left edge and over the staples.

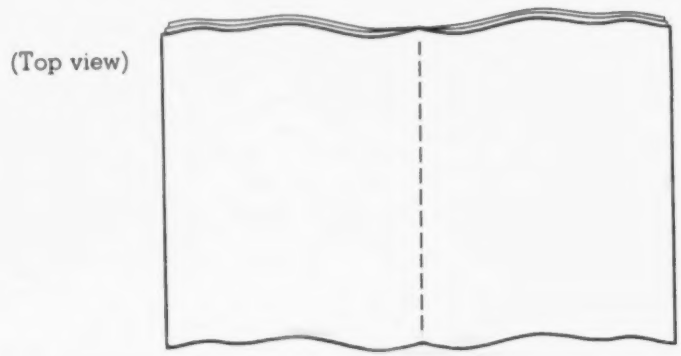
# Simple Book #2

You can also turn the blank pages sideways and fold them in half, like this:

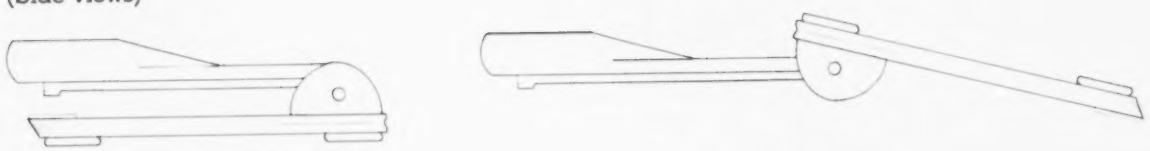



This way every sheet gives you four sides to write on, if you want. Two sheets give you eight sides, three sheets twelve sides, and so on.

To attach the folded sheets, unfold them and stack them on something firm but with "give," like a piece of cardboard or a carpet or a folded towel. Open the stapler's jaws and put staples down through the sheets where they're folded, like this:



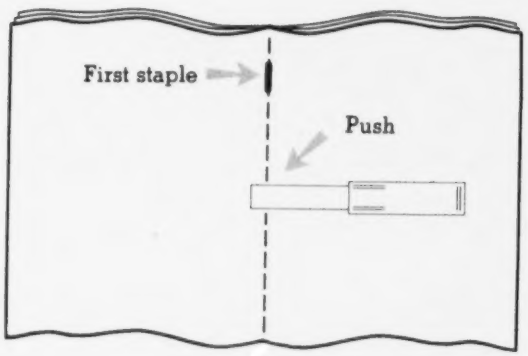

(Side views)



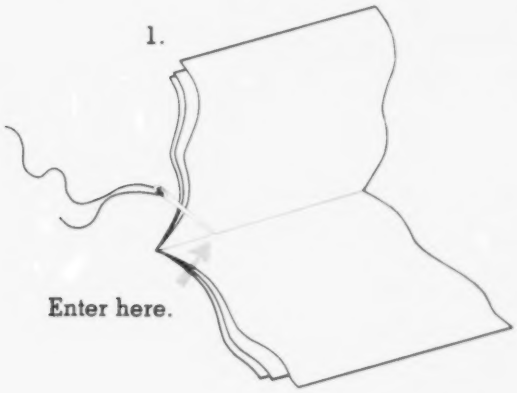
Stapler in normal position

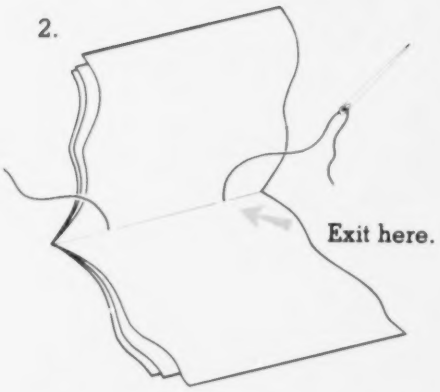
Stapler with jaws open

The stapler wobbles sometimes when you use it this way, so you might need to practice a little or ask for help. When the staples go through, turn over the sheets and bend the staple legs down.



Another way to bind the sheets together is to sew them with a needle and thread (or yarn). The knot or bow can be either inside or outside the book, though inside is a little neater.



Now you have a paperback book of your writing.

# Illustrations

Here are five art projects you can use to illustrate your writing. Or you can do them just for the fun of it. If you use art work in the book you make, it can go on the same page as the writing, or on a separate page by itself.

The following five art projects can be done on their own, but they do go nicely with some of the writing exercises in this book, namely:

1. Blind Contour Drawing can go with Describing.
2. Eraser Printing can go with Haiku.
3. Collage (art) can go with Collage (writing).
4. Exquisite Corpse can go with Partners.
5. Stencils can go with Inventing.

# Blind Contour Drawing

## Materials:

- paper
- pencil (or crayon or magic marker)

For centuries artists have used blind contour drawing as a way of learning to see better, and so to draw better. It is a way of following the outside edge (contour) of any object you see. When you draw, you probably spend most of your time looking at your drawing, not at the thing you are drawing. Blind contour drawing helps you focus your attention on the thing you are drawing.

Pick an object to draw, such as your shoe. Put it on a table in front of you. Place your pencil on the paper, but when you start to move the pencil, pretend that its point is touching the outline (edge) of the shoe. Move the pencil very slowly.

Look only at what you're drawing, not at your paper. Don't move your eyes away from the point at which you imagine your pencil is moving along the edge of the shoe. (Well, O.K., you can peek once or twice at your paper.) Be very careful to go around the entire shoe, following every little nook and cranny, up and down, in and out along the edge of the shoe.

For the lines of the object *inside* its edges, you can look at your paper for the starting and ending points.

Now try other objects: your hand, a cat, someone's face, a plant, etc. Also, try drawing the same object many times.

This way of drawing takes quite a lot of practice, so be patient and your rewards will be great. Don't be surprised if your drawing is exaggerated or lopsided. This weird look can be funny or even beautiful.

## Examples

*—Chris/*
Grade 6

*—Harry/*
Grade 5

(Practice sheet for blind contour drawing)

# Eraser Printing

## Materials:

- Art Gum eraser (the big tan ones that are square or rectangular blocks of rubber)
- plastic picnic knife
- ink pad (or several of them in different colors)

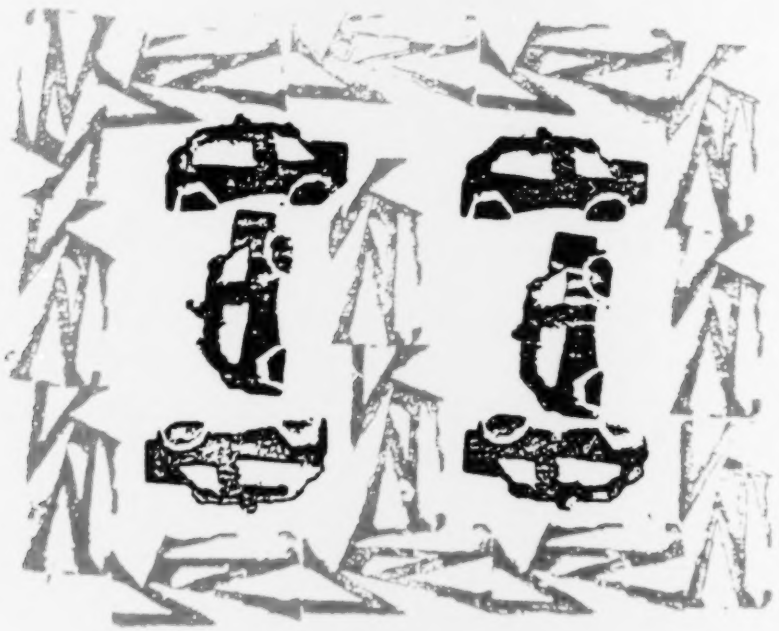
Many centuries ago, the Japanese invented a way of printing pictures by using hand-cut woodblocks. Woodblocks are flat pieces of wood with pieces scraped or cut out, sort of like wooden desk tops that kids have carved names in. For this project, in place of wooden blocks we will use erasers, and cut a design into them with a plastic knife.

Use whatever design you want—it doesn't have to be a picture of anything, just a design. When cutting the design into the eraser, try holding the knife at an angle rather than straight down, so that you cut a little V groove.

After you have cut a simple design (including perhaps shapes cut in from the edges of the eraser) press it onto the stamp pad, the way you would a rubber stamp. Then press the eraser onto your paper, leaving the image there.

Experiment with different ways to combine the single images. Turn the design in different directions, make it overlap itself, print it in different colors. Use it in different ways to make a new, bigger design.

## Example



*—Anna/*
Grade 6

(Practice sheet for eraser printing)

# Collage

## Materials:

- magazines (or newspapers, drawings, comic books, etc.)
- construction paper (or heavy paper)
- scissors
- Elmer's glue
- little dish (optional)
- soft brush (optional)

In the early part of our century, the Spanish artist Pablo Picasso invented a new kind of art: instead of painting a picture of a thing, he glued the real thing right onto the painting. For example, instead of doing a painting of a newspaper, he glued a real newspaper to his canvas. This new kind of art was called *collage*.

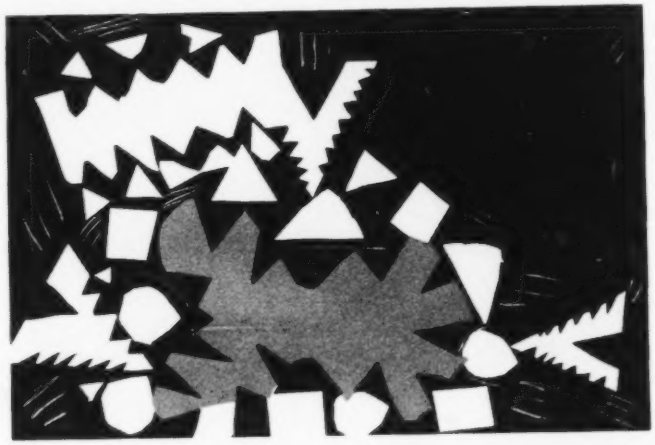
Collages are easy and interesting to do. All you need are some old magazines to cut up, a small dish with Elmer's glue that has been thinned with a little water, and a soft brush. (If you don't have a little dish and brush, you can use the glue right out of the bottle.)

Look through the magazines for pictures you like and cut them out. Then arrange them on a piece of heavier paper (the blank sheet we've given you on the next page is just for practice), put glue on the edges of the back of each piece, and glue them down. You can make the pieces overlap if you want.

Part of the fun of this is combining pictures of things that would usually (or never!) be seen together. For example, you might want to glue a person's head onto the body of a donkey, and then glue that onto the top of a tree.

Pictures from magazines are just one type of thing you can glue down. You can also use pieces of colored paper, pieces of drawings, old tickets, candy wrappers, comic books, and so on.

## Example



*—Tony/*
Grade 3



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Now it's your turn...

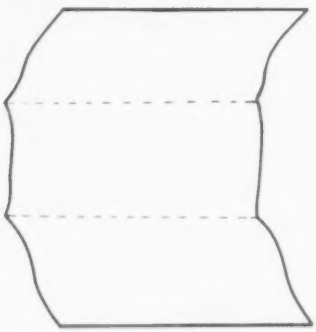
(Practice sheet for collage)

# Exquisite Corpse

## Materials:

- paper
- pencil (or colored pencils or markers)

A group of modern artists called Surrealists used to sit down after a dinner party and, for fun, fold a piece of paper into three parts, like this:



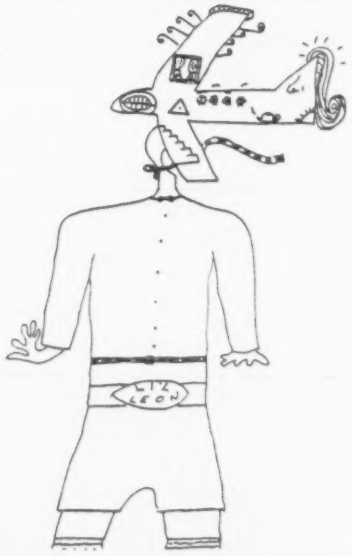
Then, using a lot of detail and making it as fantastic as possible, the first person would draw a wild head on the top folded section. Then he would draw the outline of the neck carefully across the fold, and then fold his drawing under so that the head couldn't be seen by the next person.

He would pass the paper to the next person, who would start from the neck lines (that the first person had drawn across the fold) and draw the shoulders, arms, and body, down to the waist. At the waist, she would draw the outlines across the second fold, and fold it all under so that the next artist would be able to draw the body below the waist but not be able to see what the first two people had drawn.

None of the three artists knew what the whole imaginary character would look like until the paper was unfolded. It's really amazing to unfold the drawing and see what's there.

Try this new way of drawing with your friends. If you want, tear out the next sheet and use it for your first "exquisite corpse."

## Examples




(Dotted lines show where the sheets were folded.)

Now it's your turn. . .

Cut here

Fold

(Practice sheet for exquisite corpse)

Fold

Cut here

# Stencils

## Materials:

- stencil sheet (use the one on the *back cover* of this book, or make your own)
- scissors
- crayons (or pencils or markers)
- paper

More than a hundred years ago the French artist Paul Cézanne said that everything we see is made out of three primary shapes: circles (or spheres), triangles (or cones), and squares (or boxes). The back cover of this book has these and other shapes, in different sizes, for you to use.

A stencil is a sheet of paper or cardboard with certain shapes cut out, leaving a hole through which you can color.

All you do is hold the stencil down on a piece of paper and fill in one of the open shapes, then move the paper or stencil a little and fill in again, and so on.

You might want to try different colors in the same shape, or overlapping the shapes. Once you see how the stencil sheet works, use the shapes on it to make fantastic space ships, flower gardens, robots, a design, or anything else you can think of.

## Examples

*—June/*
Grade 3

# The "Dummy"

If your book is going to be the folded kind and you're including art work with your writing, it's a good idea to plan out the book before you start stapling and illustrating it and copying your writing into it. This planning is easy if you first make a "dummy."

A dummy is a rough model of your book. You can make it out of notebook paper or any old pieces. All you do is make a quick, crude version of your book, and make a note on each page as to what will go there in the finished version. Numbering the pages will help you keep straight what goes where. You'll be surprised how helpful the dummy is in planning your book so it comes out right.

# Uses of Your Book

After you've written, illustrated, and even published your book, what do you do with it?

You can:

- Give it to a friend or relative. It makes a really nice present, one your friend can get nowhere else.
- Well, maybe just *lend* it to them.
- Use it to read your writing aloud to your friends and family.
- Put it in your family bookshelf, in your classroom bookshelf, or in your school bookshelf. If it disappears later, be happy: someone liked it enough to want to have it.
- Make extra copies.
- Sell it to the highest bidder.
- Send it to a magazine that publishes writing by kids your age. Be sure to enclose an envelope with your name and address and the correct postage on it, so the magazine editors can tell you whether or not they will publish your writing.
- Keep it for yourself. Keep it for a long time, like ten years, in your own personal time capsule. Then take it out and read it and see who you used to be. It is an amazing experience.
- Go on to your next book.
- Make hundreds more.

# Glossary

**Anonymous:** no name given. A book by an anonymous author is one without an author's name on it.

**Advertisements:** ads (in magazines, on tv, the radio, billboards, and posters).

**Capitalization:** using capital letters, instead of small ones. Your teacher can help you learn the rules for when to use capital letters and when not to.

**Collage** (pronounced "co-*lahzh*"): an art work using pieces that are glued down. The word "collage" comes from a French word that means "glue."

**Construction paper:** a paper that is heavier and thicker than notebook paper. It comes in colors and can be bought in the stationery department of most discount stores and supermarkets.

**Conversation:** people talking with each other, as in "We had a long conversation."

**Draft:** a version. When you write something, that's its first draft. If you revise it, it's then in its second draft. More changes? Third draft. And so on.

**Fascinating:** so interesting you forget everything else for a while.

**Glossary:** an explanation of what the harder words in a book mean. This page is a glossary for this book.

**Optional:** not required. "The homework is optional" means you can either do it or not.

**Punctuation:** the use of commas, periods, exclamation points, and other little marks that help make a sentence clearer.

**Typeface:** the style or look of the particular letters (type) used to print a book, magazine, newspaper, menu, etc. The typeface of the words you are now reading is called Stymie. Now the words are in Baskerville. See the difference?

# For More Writing Ideas

If you want more ideas for writing, read the following books:

**Wishes, Lies, and Dreams** by Kenneth Koch. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

**Rose, Where Did You Get That Red?** by Kenneth Koch. New York: Random House, 1974.

**The Whole Word Catalogue 1**, edited by Rosellen Brown and others. New York: Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 1972.

**The Writing Workshop: Volumes 1 and 2** by Alan Ziegler. New York: Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 1981 and 1984.

**Personal Fiction Writing** by Meredith Sue Willis. New York: Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 1984.

**The Young Writer's Handbook** by Susan and Stephen Tchudi. New York: Scribner's, 1985.

**How to Make Poetry Comics** by Dave Morice. New York: Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 1983.

(This list gives the book title, author, publisher's city, publisher's name, and date of publication.)

To find these books, ask at your school or public library. If your library doesn't have a book you want, see if the librarian can get it for you from another library.

If you want to buy any of these books, see if your local bookstore can order them. If they can't, write to: Publications Dept., Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 5 Union Square West, New York, N.Y. 10003. Telephone 212/691-6590.

# Book Review

Here's your chance to tell me what you think of *The Writing Book*. Your ideas will help me make it a better book next time.

Please answer these questions:

1. Your name?
2. Your address?
3. Your age?
4. Did you like *The Writing Book?* Why?
5. Did you like the writing ideas in it? Why?
6. Did you like the art ideas in it? Why?
7. Did you like the illustrations? Why?
8. Was it so easy for you that you got bored?
9. Was it too hard?
10. What did you like best? Why?
11. What did you dislike? Why?
12. How could it be better?
13. Any other comments?

Cut along this line.

When you've finished this page, cut it out, fold, tape, and mail it to me. My address is already printed on the other side. Thank you for helping!

Fold #1

Stamp
goes
here

To: Inky Penguin
Teachers & Writers Collaborative
5 Union Square West (5th floor)
New York, N.Y. 10003

Fold #2



After folding, tape this flap.

Fish

Dream

Partners

Dialogue

Freewriting

Collage

Contours

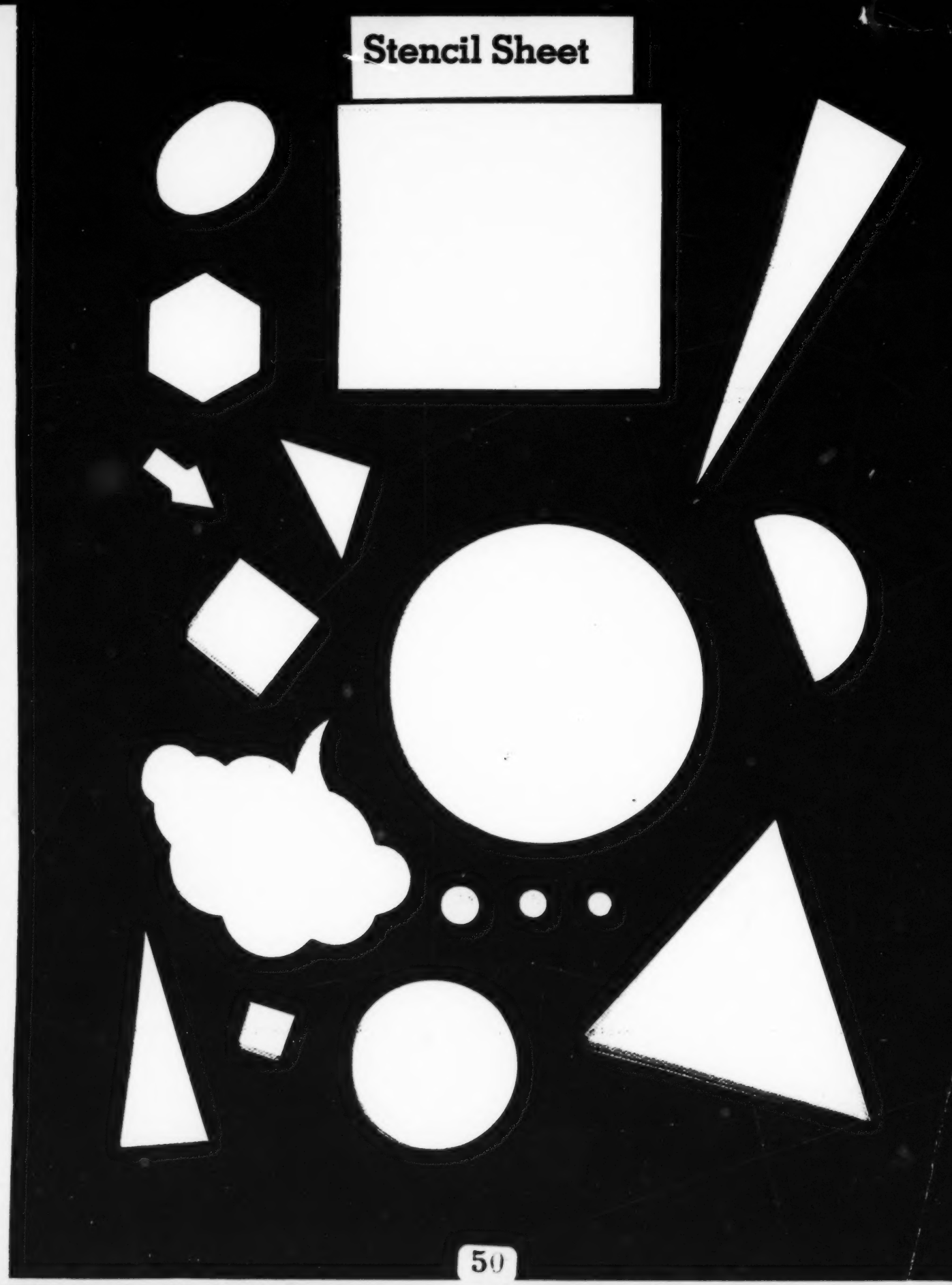
Haiku

Acrostics

Fish

Describing

# Stencil Sheet



# The Writing Book

495

TEACHER'S MANUAL

for

# The Writing Book

by Ron Padgett

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ISBN 0915924-70-6

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

## TEACHER'S MANUAL

### PURPOSE

The ideas and approaches in The Writing Book are not for turning children into poets, but rather for giving them ways to learn to express themselves with pleasure and skill, and to do so on their own.

The Writing Book is not designed to teach grammar, punctuation, or spelling. It goes below these surface disciplines, to even more basic skills -- how to get in closer touch with one's memories, feelings, and ideas, and how to bring them to light. We at Teachers & Writers believe that there is little reason to learn mechanical skills if you don't have anything to say.

We also believe that the use of original, personal language establishes a rightful and healthy connection between our private and public lives and the big world in which they take place; that such language leads to more independent and meaningful thought; and that it has a clarifying and encouraging effect on the way each individual feels about being part of the world. Whew!

### SOME GENERAL ADVICE

The Writing Book is written for students in grades 3 (advanced)-6, though in appropriate situations it can be used by both younger and older students. It is self-explanatory. You can simply give copies to your students to keep -- it is important that the books be theirs -- and let them work on their own. Or you can assign it. It's up to you. I hope you're in one of those good situations in which all you have to do is hand out the books and watch as your students happily go to work. In any case, some will ask you for advice. You can help them a lot.

The exercises in The Writing Book work better -- and your students get more out of them -- if they're seen as pleasurable adventures rather than as tiresome chores. So it's best to maintain a light atmosphere in using The Writing Book. For example:

- Don't use the exercises as a form of punishment.
- Don't grade the students' writing.
- Don't insist that their writing be all neat and correct.
- If students don't want to show you what they've written, don't insist. Show them you respect their privacy.
- Don't require them to use rhyme or a set metre in the poems they write. To insist that poetry must rhyme is to ignore the history of poetry, particularly that of the twentieth century.
- Don't be surprised if some students -- encouraged, perhaps for the first time in their lives, to write with complete freedom -- begin by writing things that are

scatalogical or in what is called "poor taste." Usually these students are just getting out of their systems something that has been suppressed too long as it is. If they persist in such a manner, gently wean them away, toward writing that is less infantile and more imaginative.

- Do allow and encourage them to write freely, to let themselves go, to write as extravagantly and wildly as they like.
- Do praise their work whenever you can, and be gentle with your criticism.
- Do encourage them to trade and talk about their writing, to read it to each other, to make booklets of it and to give them to their friends and relatives.
- Do the writing exercises yourself, and read your writing to the class. You'll be amazed by their interest and by the positive effect it has on your students.

Note: Page references in this manual are to The Writing Book, not to the manual itself.

THE EXERCISES

The writing ideas in The Writing Book are expandable and adaptable: you needn't just go through them once doing them only one way. Although they are fundamental exercises arranged in a thought-out sequence, it's O.K. to skip around if you want to, or to modify them as you see fit. Most of them can be done in the form of either poetry or prose.

Here are some ways to extend the exercises in The Writing Book. You and your students will doubtless find others.

I Remember and Used to/But Now (pp. 2 and 4)

Both of these are a good way to begin teaching memoir, autobiography, and family history. It's much more natural and effective to generate a scene out of a single, powerful memory than to try to recreate in broad strokes what happened over a large span of time. I Remember's are good for calling up vivid images of the past; Used to/But Now can lead to more analytical thinking, e.g. the differences between the past and the present, how they came about, and what they might mean.

Group I Remember's, perhaps with each student contributing a couple of lines, can be based on particular themes and occasions:

- the earliest thing I remember
- what I remember about the first day in school
- red things I remember
- memories about animals
- memories of Christmas, Halloween, etc.
- memories of surprising moments
- memories of a particular person
- memories of yesterday
- memories of things that happened one minute ago

The Used to/But Now examples in The Writing Book are atypical, in that one is a collaboration and the other repeats the same But Now line.

Used to/But Now can be expanded into Used to/But Now/and Will Be.

Dreams (p. 6)

Dreams offer so many classroom possibilities that it's hard to know where to begin (and end). Here are a few:

- Turn off the lights and have a daydream period.
- Combine dream writing with the reading of fantasy literature.
- Write about nightmares while studying horror literature and ghost stories. Obviously, be alert here.
- Keep a dream diary, a parallel to a regular diary.

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• Do dream writing while studying the myths and legends of ancient and so-called primitive civilizations.

• Discuss the relation between dreams and prophecy, dreams and mental health, dreams and insanity, dreams and movies.

• Within reason, tell your dreams to your students, and encourage them to trade dreams with their relatives.

Good anthologies of dreamlike poetry are British and American Surrealist Poetry edited by Edward Germain (Penguin, 1978) and The Poetry of Surrealism edited by Michael Benedikt.

Inventing (p. 8)

There are all sorts of subtle variations in the art of fabrication, from the so-called white lie to the gargantuan hyperbole. Some are based mostly on fact, others on pure imagination. Still others move back and forth between fact and fantasy. Some fabrications are malicious, others are just big jokes. At some point you might want to discuss all this with your students.

You could also discuss hoaxes (such as Orson Welles' famous radio broadcast of the invasion from Mars), the art of lie detection (through electrical devices and through interpretations of body language), and the meaning of "keeping one's word" and how it relates to traditional codes of honor. In some cases you might even have to explain the difference between lying (saying something untrue in order to mislead someone) and inventing (saying something not necessarily true as a means to the pleasures of fantasy or wit).

Getting back to writing, though: one predictable failure of this exercise is that students will be satisfied with too little. If this is their first chance to tell lies in school, at first they may go no further than such mundanities as "I love homework" and "I have a million dollars." Encourage them to go further, to "I love homework because hard arithmetic makes me laugh my head off and it bounces happily on the floor" or "I have a million flaming dollars that sing a song of great joy as they go up in smoke and become angel money."

Freewriting (p. 10)

Freewriting produces a lot of verbiage, if not gibberish, but it also helps eliminate the debilitating misconception that everything written down must be perfect. Sometimes it also leads to ideas and stylistic turns that otherwise would have remained undiscovered. The very "letting go" allows one to "get."

• Present your students with brief examples of literature that use the techniques of stream of consciousness and automatic writing, such as Finnegans Wake, in which James Joyce lets his writing run wild with puns, word-play, and euphony, or William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, or André Breton and Philippe Soupault's The Magnetic Fields. It

doesn't matter that these are considered "difficult" books -- just be sure the excerpts aren't too long. Discuss the relation between these writings and dream writings, in which the unconscious has its play.

- Compare the pace of freewriting with that of speed reading.
- Have your students write at a normal pace for five minutes, then freewrite for five minutes. Then have them go outdoors and walk normally for 30 seconds, then run hard for 30 seconds. Discuss with them how the different speeds felt.
- Have your students freewrite not on a regular sheet of paper, but on an adding machine tape turned sideways (like a scroll). Discuss with them how the paper size affected the way they wrote.

Describing (p.12)

- Tell your students to close their eyes. Ask them how many sides pencils usually have, and how pencil erasers are attached, and what words (if any) are printed on their pencils.

  Next, have the students describe something they see every day but rarely look at closely, such as the letter a, their pet's lips, or their own hands. Have them examine these first from a distance, then up very close.
- Discuss the clinical nature of police descriptions of suspects. Example: "Suspect is a male Caucasian, 6'2", 148 pounds, short silver hair, hazel eyes, glasses, last seen wearing tan pants, a black windbreaker, and a brown baseball hat. Suspect is armed and considered dangerous."

  Next, have the students write a police description of themselves or of someone they know outside of class.

  Then have them write such a description of a non-human thing, like a carrot, a cloud, an ocean, or a bug.
- If there's no possibility of painful embarrassment, have students write self-descriptions of how they look from behind. Afterward, have volunteers read their descriptions, facing away from the class.
- Have students write a description of any object, without using its name or saying how it's used. Then read the descriptions aloud and see who can guess what the object is. What makes it easier to guess some than others? Did the accuracy of description help?
- Ask the students to look carefully at someone asleep, and describe that person. Then look at and describe the same person awake.
- Have students describe something or someone in motion.

Acrostics (p. 14)

- Use spelling words as the spine words for acrostics poems.

• Use entire phrases or sentences as spines for acrostics poems. For example:

GIVE yourself a present, like
ME! I'm as pretty as the Statue of
LIBERTY, but I'm just an
ORdinary girl. So
GIVE yourself a break.
ME, I'm going to give
DEATH a kick in the pants.

• Use the spine word(s) as the ends of lines, rather than as the beginnings. Or use it in the middle of the lines and fill in on both sides.

Haiku (p. 16)

The Writing Book presents just one way of writing haiku. There are of course others, more subtle, with a pleasure that sort of creeps up on you, giving you a gentle thrill, not the slapstick jolt of the haiku recommended here. Slapstick is, however, a good way to introduce the haiku because it's often funny and immediately accessible. The trouble is that it doesn't always wear well.

Give your students a wide variety of haiku, and discuss how each one works. Prepare by finding a quiet spot and reading a lot of haiku, marking the ones you like, the ones that make some kind of light go on in your mind. Then go back and examine these favorites one by one. Read some aloud. How are they built? Do they surprise you? If so, how? What does the poet do to set up the surprise? Does the poem zoom in on a smaller and smaller world, or all at once make a small world seem very large? What kind of nouns does the poem use? Does the syntax affect the movement of the poem's content? Look at each haiku at length, allowing your mind to bounce back and forth between the poem's meaning, its shape, and its devices.

Japanese haiku present a world that is at the same time real and not real, a vision similar to that of Zen Buddhism. This different view of reality is one of the things that make Japanese haiku so paradoxical and appealing.

When you take these haiku into the classroom, have your students read them and think about them. Let the students tell you what they see in the poems, before you tell them what you see. You may be surprised by how much you missed.

As in the Asian tradition of combining poetry and painting, it's a natural step for your students to illustrate their own haiku. The brevity of the form makes it particularly suitable for greeting cards, but beware of the powerful pull toward cliché that traditional holidays exert. Better to have your students write haiku, illustrate them, and then invent a new holiday out of those haiku (Falling Leaves Week, Exploding Duck Day, Fast New Bicycle Minute, etc.).

I've never seen much value in making haiku conform to

the somewhat misinterpreted schema of 5-7-5 syllable counts, mainly because the Japanese "syllable" and the English syllable aren't quite the same thing. Some good American haiku have been written following the 5-7-5 pattern, but their quality derives from beauty, concision, and surprise, not from arithmetic.

For more on the history and art of the haiku, see The Haiku Handbook by William J. Higginson (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985).

Partners (p. 18)

Not only can any of the exercises in The Writing Book be done by two or more people together, they themselves can be combined. For example:

- haiku acrostics
- invented dreams
- dialogue I Remember's
- collaged Used to/But Now's

Oral collaborations are a great way to get warmed up to written ones. You can take dictation from the whole class, or you can have kids break up into small groups and do spontaneous oral collaborations. That is, each student in turn contributes as quickly as possible to the work in question. The work can be done:

- word by word
- phrase by phrase
- sentence by sentence
- as few or as many words as each student wishes. This works partiularly well when one student breaks off right in the middle, so the next student is compelled to carry it on: "Yesterday I saw this great..." The next student might continue it with "...huge banana that was about ready to..." and then leave it for the next student, and so on.

Dialogue (p. 20)

- Point out that dialogue can have more than two speakers.
- Develop skits or short plays from dialogue fragments.
- Use dialogue fragments as a starting point for stories.
- Dialogue works well as a collaboration; try note-passing in class, using a sheet of paper large enough to accommodate an entire dialogue.
- Bring in a tape recording of two people talking. Hand out a typed transcript of part of the conversation. Discuss the differences between real conversation and written dialogue. Point out, for example, that unless the speakers are unusually articulate, transcriptions of conversations sound too messy, with all those uh's and um's and pauses and incomplete sentences.

Collage (p. 22)

Students can make collage poems and prose works from found material or from their own previous writings. Have them:

- cut two of their poems in half horizontally, then match up the top of the first with the bottom of the second, the top of the second with the bottom of the first.
- cut up two poems vertically, and switch halves.
- cut up a poem into its lines, then rearrange the lines to make a new poem (it's O.K. to leave a few lines out, if necessary).
- cut out each entry in an index of first lines and use some to make a new poem.

In all the above, some rewriting will be in order, after the initial word shifting.

The point of these collage exercises is not only to make art, but also to show students that words can be treated as the moveable objects they are. The freer your students are about moving words around, the more likely they are to revise and improve their own writing.

Revising (p. 24)

Take any brief poem or prose piece and:

- take out all the nouns and replace them with other nouns. ("Give me liberty or give me death!" might become "Give me pizza or give me immortality!")
- take out all the verbs and replace them with other verbs ("I came, I saw, I conquered" might become "I drowned, I woke up, I sang.")
- add an adjective to every noun ("The sun rose in the sky" might become "The black sun rose in the porcelain sky.")
- add prepositional phrases all over the sentence.

Students love to see anything taken to the point of absurdity (for example, "I saw a boy" expanded to "In my house under the table I saw a boy without a head on a cloud beside the moon"), and at the same time naturally learn what prepositional phrases are, how they "feel," how to avoid ganging them up too much in essay writing, and how to gang them up in imaginative writing.

- change nouns from concrete to abstract ("We drove to the baseball game and drank a root beer" becomes "We drove to the sporting event and drank a beverage"). Also, change nouns from abstract to concrete. Teaching these by example is more effective than simply presenting generalized principles.
- change verbs from active to passive voice, and vice versa, and talk about the difference. Style manuals and textbooks rightly warn against overuse of the passive voice, causing some writers to resist using it even when it's called for.

Revision and copyediting are not immediately attractive to most students. Of course there are those who have a mania for correctness and neatness, a mania that prevents them from opening up and taking chances in their writing. Ideally student writers should be able first to write freely and

without fear of errors, then go back later and improve those first drafts. In any case, students should understand that imagination and mechanical correctness have nothing to do with each other: some great poets have been terrible spellers.

For years poets and other creative writers in the schools have been downplaying the importance of correctness, not because they approve of sloppiness, but because correctness -- which the classroom teacher is required to teach -- has a chilling effect on the imagination. It's hard to imagine anyone becoming articulate simply out of a desire to be correct. Skills develop better from the love of language, its playfulness, its usefulness, its relevance to real life.

•

Additional Publication/Performance Uses of These Works (p. 40)

- public readings, class shows, assemblies
- broadsides
- class magazines and anthologies
- readers for other students
- travelling troupes from classroom to classroom for performances
- bulletin boards
- sales of booklets and broadsides to cover costs of printing, etc.

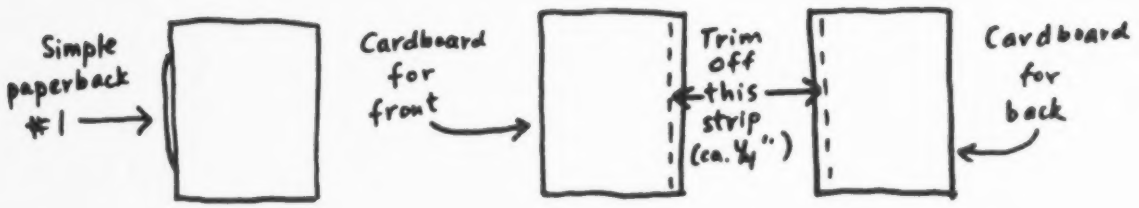
How to Make a Hardback Book

In The Writing Book students are shown how to make their own simple paperback books (pp. 26-28). Most students could use some encouragement and free time to do this. You can also teach them how to take it one step further, to the making of hardback books.

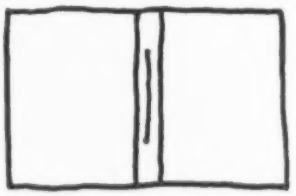
Materials:

- Cardboard or stiff poster board
- Cover paper or cloth. Maybe gift wrapping paper, wallpaper, a piece of old shirt or sheet.
- Glue (ordinary white glue, like Elmer's, is best)
- Scissors

Take a simple homemade paperback book that has a blank front and back cover. Cut out two pieces of cardboard the same size as the folded paperback. Then trim off a piece, as shown below:

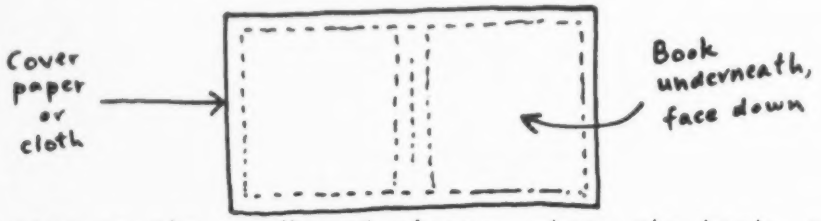



Glue one piece to the front, the other piece to the back of the paperback book.

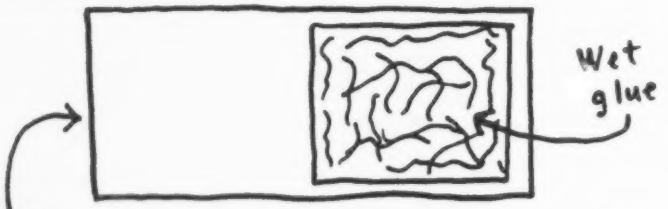


Leave a little open space along the spine.

Now cut a piece of cover paper or cloth two inches bigger in every direction than the unfolded book.

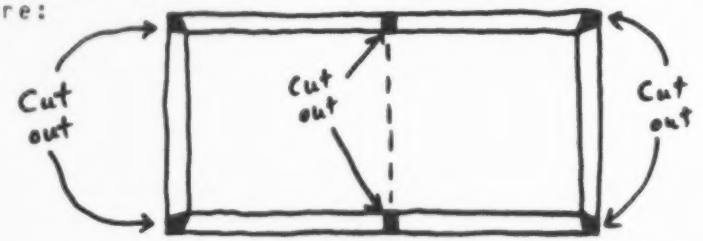



Spread glue on the cardboard pieces, close the book, and lay it on the inside surface of your cover paper or cloth.

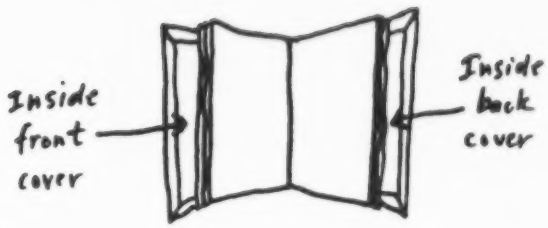



Now fold this part over and press it against the wet glue. Be sure to let it all dry with the book closed.

When it's dry, open it up again and cut little pieces out of the corners and at the top and bottom of the spine, as shown here:




Now glue down the flaps to the inside of the front of the book and the inside of the back of the book.




(If you want, you can also glue a piece of paper over these flaps, to cover their edges, which are usually a bit ragged.)

It's a lot easier to make a simple paperback than to add a hard cover to it, which is why we've relegated this to the teacher's manual.

After making hardcovers with your students, you will want to have them take a look at hardcover books from big publishers. Your students will probably be surprised by how much of bookmaking they now understand, and why hardcover books are sometimes called "cloth" editions, why the meeting of the two sides is called the "spine."

Beyond the simple paperback there are options other than the hardback, such as books in odd shapes (circular, triangular, etc.) and sizes (huge, skinny) and formats (a small book inside a larger book, books with foldouts, etc.).

ILLUSTRATIONS (pp. 29-39)

The five art exercises in The Writing Book (blind contour drawing, eraser printing, collage, exquisite corpses, and stencils) can be seen as related directly to five writing exercises (describing, haiku, collage, partners, and inventing, respectively). Of course the art exercises can also be done entirely on their own, without reference to specific writing projects.

You could suggest other simple techniques for illustrating books:

- painting with watercolor or poster paint
- using rubber stamp kits
- rubbings: lay a sheet of paper on top of a textured surface, such as a piece of wood, then gently sweep the flat side of a pencil lead back and forth across the paper.
- photographs (Polaroids are quickest.)
- xeroxes
- transfer drawings: lay a freshly printed newspaper face down on a clean sheet of paper and, using a dull pencil, burnish the newspaper sheet, which will transfer an image onto the clean sheet. Sunday comics give more colorful results than the daily paper.

BOOK REVIEW (p. 43)

At the end of The Writing Book we have added a final writing assignment, disguised as a questionnaire for kids to fill out and return to us. The questionnaire encourages the student to categorize, analyze, and articulate their reactions to The Writing Book. The series of questions provides a loose outline for what could be developed into paragraph form and from there into an essay.

The questionnaire will also, we hope, show the children that their opinions are valued and worth expressing.

A FINAL NOTE

We hope you like The Writing Book and this manual, and that you find them useful. We also hope that you will let us know if you have any suggestions for improving it, in future editions. We'd like to hear from you. Please write or call us at

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